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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT

July 6, 1959

EUR - Mr. Long

S/S 4966

Berlin Contingency Planning
Acceleration of Military Measures

Attached is your approved memorandum to Mr. Murphy on the above subject, which is returned to you for necessary action. It is understood CER is preparing a memorandum on the third recommendation.

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By	U.S. NARA, Date 1/22/81

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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MEMORANDUM

To: G - Mr. Murphy
Through: S/S
From: EUR - Livingston T. Merchant

JUL 1 1959

Subject: Berlin Contingency Planning - Acceleration of Military Measures

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EO 11652: 1/6/60 ① ② ③ ④

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August 4, 1975

Statement of Problem

We have been considering whether the Three Powers should seize the opportunity offered by the prolongation of the Geneva discussions to take additional military preparatory measures which might impress the Soviets of the seriousness of our intention to maintain our access to Berlin at the risk of war and thus induce them to adopt a more conciliatory attitude.

Existing Tripartite Plans

The program for military preparatory measures previously agreed on by the Three Powers is contained in the "Berlin Contingency Planning" paper of April 4. This paper provides for military preparatory measures to be taken at three distinct junctures: (1) as soon as possible (i.e., beginning before the initiation of negotiations), (2) after the USSR has turned over its functions to the GDR, and (3) after Allied traffic has been forcibly obstructed.

The measures in the first situation were to be "quiet preparatory and precautionary military measures of a kind which will not create public alarm but which will be detectable by Soviet intelligence". Live Oak has in the meantime completed planning for such measures and, to the best of our knowledge, the plans have already been implemented. The measures are described at Tab A.

The measures in the second and third situations would be "more elaborate military measures in Europe, which would be generally observable". In the third situation, military preparations would be "intensified" and "readily observable" and would be implemented while the Three Governments were taking decisions regarding the use of force to restore freedom of access. Live Oak has not yet completed its planning for measures to be taken in the second and third situations, but we have been informed unofficially that the plans may include the items described at Tab B.

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In retrospect, it seems fair to assume that the April 4 paper anticipated a rather precipitate development of the access crisis rather than prolonged negotiations and that the military measures agreed on for the period before the USSR turns over its functions to the GDR are probably inadequate to provide continuously or increasingly convincing proof of our readiness to face an ultimate resolution of the access problem by force.

Additional Military Measures

We do not have at this time any specific suggestions as to additional military measures which might be taken at this time, but we are inclined to feel that a number of the "more elaborate" measures which Live Oak is reportedly considering (for example, items 1 through 8 of Tab B) are not of the kind which might, in the present circumstances, "create public alarm" and therefore might be implemented at this time even without any modification of the tripartite agreement embodied in the April 4 paper.

Although motivated by other considerations, the transfer of United States Air Force units from France to Germany may be interpreted by the Soviets as military preparatory measures.

The question arises whether we can impress the Soviets of the seriousness of our intentions by any military preparatory measures except those which involve substantial inconvenience or cost to ourselves and which provide the public chilling reminders of the potential danger of the situation. Action of this kind would involve maintaining a very delicate balance. Since the Soviets appear to place considerable reliance on the desire of Western public opinion for peace even at a high price, those measures which might have the most salutary effect on the Soviets might be precisely the ones which appeared to involve some psychological preparation of the Western public for possible hostilities. On the other hand, too great a shock effect on public opinion might boomerang and only serve to persuade public opinion that the abandonment of West Berlin to the Communists would be the lesser of two evils.

Presidential Approval

The decision that we should, between now and the time of the turn-over of Soviet functions to the GDR, take "quiet and precautionary military measures ... of a kind which would be detectable by Soviet intelligence but which would not create public alarm" was taken in conference with the President. Presidential approval would therefore be required for planning which envisaged taking at this time any measures likely to create public alarm.

British

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British and French Attitudes

A change in the program set forth in the April 4 paper would obviously require the concurrence of the British and French also. In view of the relatively more optimistic view which the British entertain regarding the possibilities of reaching an understanding in negotiation with the Soviets, we believe they would hesitate to agree to additional military measures at this time. The French might be less reluctant. The French Embassy has informed us that the French Government considers that this might be an appropriate moment for the Three Powers to intensify civil defense activities, accumulation of stockpiles, and planning for eventual rationing in order to impress the USSR of the seriousness with which they regard the situation.

Recommendations

1. That you raise this question in the Ambassadorial Group meeting July 10, discussing it along the lines of the foregoing memorandum, and ask for British and French views; JUL 2 1959
Approve 47 Disapprove
2. That you authorize us in the interim to raise the matter with Defense and the JCS and to ask for their suggestions regarding additional military measures, "of a kind which will not create public alarm but which will be detectable by Soviet intelligence", which might be taken at this time; and JUL 2 1959
Approve 47 Disapprove
3. That you raise with the Secretary the question whether we should obtain the President's approval for the consideration of measures to be taken at this time which might be generally observable and could create a measure of public uneasiness. JUL 2 1959

Concurrences

EUR - Mr. Hillenbrand

EUR - Mr. Kohler

Approve 47 Disapprove

Attachments:

1. "Military Preparatory Measures Already Planned and Presumably Carried Out", Tab A.
2. "More Elaborate Military Preparatory Measures which Live Oak is Reportedly Considering for Later Implementation", Tab B.

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